

#3

Castle Heights



A RETROSPECTIVE FANZINE FEATURING:

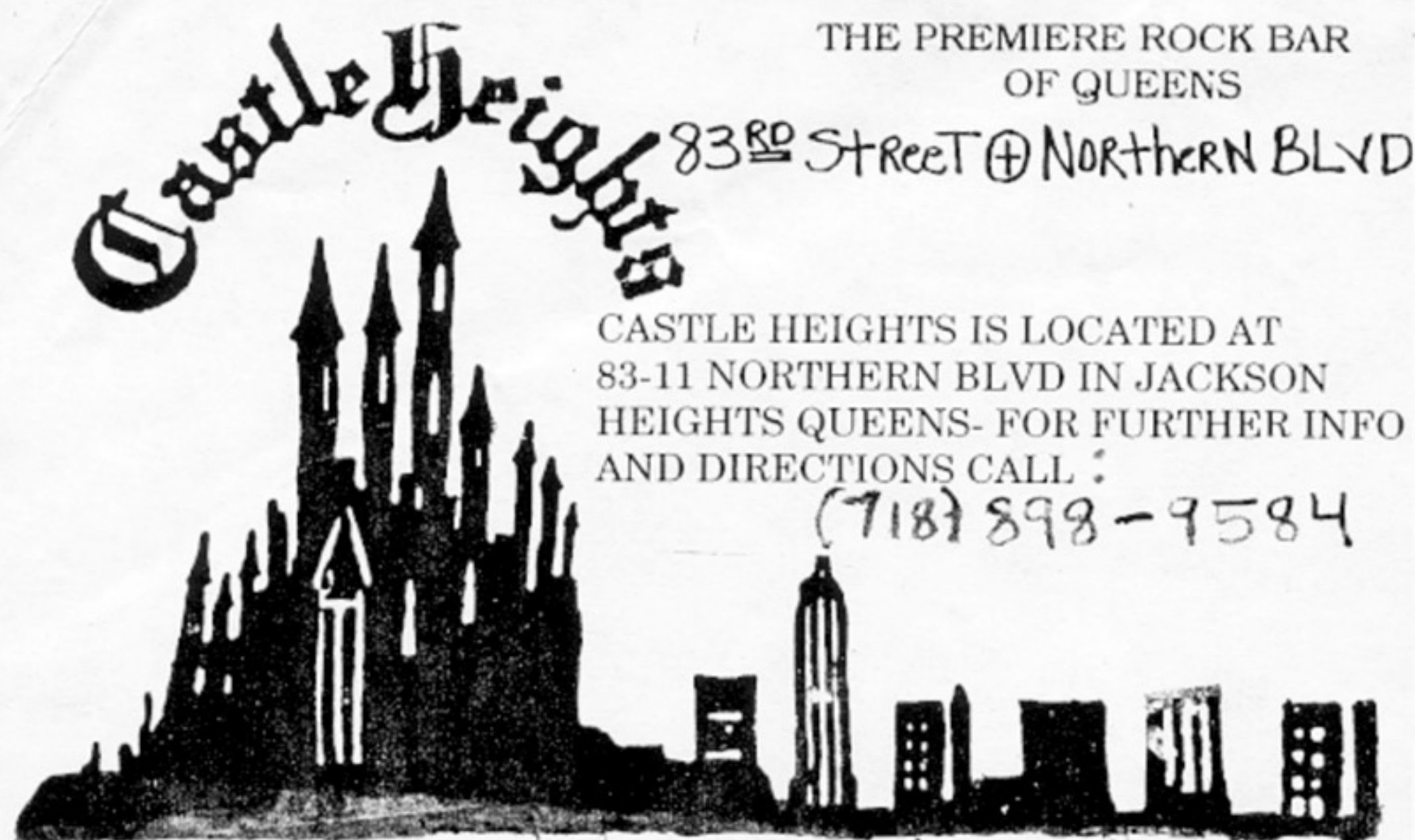


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Castle Heights

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Welcome to DEEP CUTZ FANZINE #3! Will this be the 3rd and final installment of the international best selling archival fanzine? Who the fuck knows, time will tell if I ever get the urge to put together another poorly designed tribute to a band/scene etc.. But as far as this issue is concerned, as you already know by this point this is about the infamous, legendary Queens, NY venue **CASTLE HEIGHTS!**

Is this the be all and end all on Castle Heights and the bands that played there? Absolutely not, there is almost too much to cover with regards to the many different styles of bands that frequently played Castle Heights that I could contain to a 40 page fanzine. Wether that's hardcore bands like **Denied, Inhuman, Relentless** etc or death metal bands like **Dehumanized, Malignancy, Pyrexia** etc that I've missed out, just be aware that these bands and any others I missed out are well worth your time. That said, the interviews in this fanzine give some sort of an idea of how tight knit the community at Castle Heights was, wether that's through the **FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH** bands or just the general stories of people going to hang at Castle Heights when nothing was on. Without deliving too much into hyperbole, I think the Hardcore and Death Metal bands that called Castle Heights their home pushed the boundaries of their respective genres to new extremes, that still inspire new bands starting today 20 years after Castle Heights closed it's doors.

THANK YOU: Kevin 'Castle' Scondotto, Tom Murphy, Phil Vazquez, Sal LoCoco, Barry Goatamentise for the interviews

Jaybird for the front cover art, Lumpy for the flyers, the legend Carl Gunhouse for the photos and flyers, Northern Unrest fanzine, Ball of Destruction Fanzine, Scheme fanzine, Streets of Hate fanzine, Daze records, From Within Records, Gutter Groove Fanzine for the inspiration.

FUCK YOU: HC 'tough guy' & 'working class' cosplayers, posh PC punk nerdarios, clout chasing promoters, music industry grifters.

- CONNOR / DEEP CUTZ FANZINE



SCONDOTTO DYNASTY PLAYLIST:

CLOSE



"Crooked Cops" -
On The Line Demo (1989)

CONFUSION

"A Fatal Infection" -
Taste of Hate EP (1992)

LAMENT

"Fear of the Masses" -
Drowning Room EP (1991)



"Existence" -
Inhuman EP (1996)

SHUTDOWN

"Reconsider" -
Indecision/Shutdown
split 7"
(1995)

Kevin Castle

It seems a good starting point in a fanzine on Castle Heights with an interview with Kevin 'Castle' Scondotto, the inhouse booking agent at Castle Heights from 1992 -2002. Kevin was gracious enough for a zoom interview on 23rd February 2022.

Just as a jumping off point, what was your background musically growing in your household? I know your brother Mike was in the band Confusion and your brother Mark would later play in Shutdown....

So my father was a big Elvis/50's Duwop/'70's rock fan, my uncle was a professional DJ, it's where I became fascinated with the whole talking on the radio and behind the scenes music business aspect. All my brothers were singers, my older brother Jon was associated with **Maximum Penalty** for a bit then formed **Lament**, I never really wanted to be in a band, I was more a behind the scenes guy, running fan clubs, band manager etc. I started out working with glam metal bands in the 1980s like **Slaughter**, **Dangerous Toys** etc way before being linked in with New York Hardcore scene, which was by proxy as my brothers were very notable in the scene.

Did you ever go out with your brother Mike play with Close Call or Confusion play? What was a notable show you saw them play?

Yeah **Close Call** was just a bit before **Confusion**, saw **Confusion** a bunch of times, they played my old high school for a battle of the bands, saw them play the YMCA with **Subzero**, Krazy Kountry Klub. Unfortunately, they were done by time I started working at Castle Heights, so I never got to have Confusion play Castle Heights, Mike was forming **Inhuman** not long after **Confusion** broke up.

Confusion have definitely become a reference point for bands all over at the moment trying to replicate late 1980's NYHC but just taking that one strident step into Death metal...

Oh for sure, my brother Mike would be better at answering on this but I didn't hear anyone calling them 'Deathcore' till like a decade later, it was NYHC with the volume on metal turned up. These terms like 'metalcore', 'deathcore' 'beatdown' etc I never heard of until like the late 1990s.

You started promoting shows at Castle Heights in Jan 1993 correct?

Did you have any goals with working there from the onset?

Yeah end of 1992 into 1993 I started there, became good friends with the owner Frank Castle (not The Punisher) there, we got along really well. I had a Death Metal partner there when I joined, the setup was for him to do Death Metal shows and for me to do Rock and traditional Metal shows with an arm in the Hardcore scene. Within the first year this partner had a falling out with the owner and left and I stayed, and I became the main booker at Castle Heights, end of 1994 we started really getting the name out there. I was really driven back then, I was booking Castle Heights shows on my recreational time as I was working a full time job in the city until I went full time in **1997**.

There were many of clubs in the mid 1990s such as The Wetlands, Coney Island High, Train Depot, Bond Street Café etc, was there a friendly competition with these smaller clubs in New York when it came to booking shows?

Yeah there was some, we had a competition with this place called RAW, bigger club deeper pockets etc. We were a small cap room you could only fit legally 130 people in there, but we were pretty liberal with going over that if we wanted to, highest we ever went in there was 325 people. Then there was Voodoo Lounge in Queens after them... We kinda just focused on ourselves, L'amours was a good ally to ourselves as we really respected them and they really embraced us and helped us out and fed us bands to play our place..

I know you're a big wrestling fan and made the analogy before that Castle Heights was like ECW and some of the other clubs at the time were like WCW/WWF pinching talent...

Yeah L'amours was like WWF, people compared us to ECW even in the 1990s. We were like a misfits club and when Castle Heights band went to play places like Wetlands, Coney Island High etc they batted down the hatches and come to me and say "...they're gonna behave themselves right?" like bands I didn't manage but played Castle Heights regularly like I was somehow responsible for them. I was seen as a general manager at Castle some respects. Unfortunately we did get a reputation with the 'Castle Fight's' nickname which we shrug our shoulders at now cause Castle was no more violent than any club, there were clubs on Long Island that would descend into brawls every time there was a show but one little skirmish at our place and everybody knew about it. Thank god there was no social media back in the day because my god we would've never heard the end of it.

Photo: John The Doorman



Kevin with Mindset (pre Sworn Enemy) early 1998

You went full time with booking shows at Castle Heights in 1997 and started to manage some bands, did you have any aspirations with booking and managing outside of making sure people got paid their fair share?

Yeah so I quit my other job and went full time with Castle, started a management company at same time called New Breed where I managed **Sworn Enemy, Irate, Shutdown** who were my big three, then on the side worked with **5 Minute Major, Billy Club Sandwich, EGH** etc helping them get shows. That was a time when being a Castle Heights guy was a good thing, because I could make things happen like getting **Irate** to play Canada and bands all over the North East. By 1998 we were really a force, clubs like CBGBs and Coney Island High were asking 'what's happening at Castle Heights that weekend?' or our competitors were second guessing putting on certain shows on if something was happening at our club. In 1998 we didn't give a shit if The Who were playing across the street, we will fill this club no matter what's on, we were not intimidated, we had a swagger. If our bands went to other clubs or towns, promoters would welcome us and get in good with Castle Heights.

The people who didn't want to get in good with us just did not understand Castle Heights, the morons who think violent dancing did not exist before we came along when I was seeing it in 1991/1992 at **Biohazard** shows at L'amours and The Ritz. These morons years later 'blame' us for promoting violent dancing when it was happening for years before, those morons can wear their CBGBs shirts and fuck off. We didn't cultivate or promote a scene of violence, you know I banned Lorenzo from **Sworn Enemy** for an incident from the club and I was his manager! It did annoy me, there were detractors of Castle Heights, you know we did an Undertaker rip shirt after Castle ended with 'Loved by many, hated by few, respected by all' printed on it because we were hated by more than a few. I got that people were maybe scared of Castle cause it was a rough scene, but the people there were more inclined to give you a hug than a punch in the face. You were only going to have a hard time if you weren't friendly, we were all very welcoming and protective. You know the 'Castle Fights' nickname wasn't given to us by people who liked us, that's why it's kinda offensive to us when people use it, it's a diss. Back then you know the boss didn't like hearing that nickname about his club.

Retrospectively people look back at HC bands like EGH, Irate, Sworn Enemy, Billy Club Sandwich, 5 Minute Major, as well as death metal bands like Dehumanized, Internal Bleeding etc as all existing within a similar space and feeding off each other musically, was this the case and/or did you have an active hand in trying to make this happen?

I think **Irate, Dehumanized, Goatamentise** were good examples of bands that could hang in both the Hardcore & Death Metal scenes and play those types of bills. I personally never really teamed up Hardcore bands playing on the bills with Death Metal bands, I never put **EGH** on a show with **Pyrexia, Internal Bleeding** etc or **Sworn Enemy** teaming up with **Malignancy**. I put **Dehumanized** on some mixed bill shows with Hardcore & Thrash bands but I don't recall putting them on a strictly hardcore show.

The dance parts were a big thing at Castle Heights, it was all about who could play a part and make a crowd move which all the aforementioned bands did. **All Out War** was another one who could play with **Shutdown** or **Shai Hulud**, I could mix and match but the common denominator behind a lot of these bands were that they were friends, they'd come down to watch even if they weren't playing. I mean Gary from **Billy Club** was probably working the show, Sal from **Sworn Enemy** was bouncing, a lot of the Hardcore scene guys worked at the club as well as played it.

It's quite something given the talent at Castle Heights that Sworn Enemy could sign to Elektra but Irate was self-releasing their albums when I would say they were equally as talented...

Yeah sometimes that's just life, I would've loved to have had all the bands signed but it doesn't work out that way. To give full context I managed **Sworn Enemy** when the 'Negative Outlook' EP came out on Stillborn records, when they did the debut LP on Elektra they started working with some booking agent that I did not care for, no names mentioned but I don't mind saying they outgrew me, they were going to another level, I was still managing Castle Heights and was also injured moving a pool table about and was out for months in 2002 so I had to let go of certain things. There may have been some feelings at the time about the parting but it was what it was. **Irate** was different, they had changed singers, we had a good run with **Shutdown** from 1999-2001 and then my brother moved to Florida on a whim and they were done. By 2002, I wasn't managing anyone and that same year Castle is closed! So it was all gone very quickly, 2002 was not kind to me, when it rains it pours and sometimes the good times don't always last. In 1999/2000 we were really rolling with the bands and venue and by 2002, all gone. Nothing I did, nothing the bands did, just circumstantial but happy to report today we are all very good friends, Sal from **Sworn Enemy** is one of the best quality human beings you will meet, Phil from **Irate** I argue about wrestling with him all the time one of my best friends to this day, all the members of **Shutdown** are literally and figuratively my family.

Do you think the scene at Castle Heights was intimidating to others on the outside or was it welcoming to outsiders?

Castle was very inclusive, someone the other day was talking to me complementing on how Castle Heights gave people of colour a chance to get up on stage whether they were from the latin community or African American community etc. I never really thought about it like that until this person mentioned, like even with the bands I managed too. They said "even if you didn't recognise it, people of colour did" which I thought was very nice of them to say. Castle Heights wasn't the place for you if you were some racist skinhead, you wouldn't survive it. The owners of the club were Spanish too, it was a melting pot of colours, creeds and cultures. It was a very inclusive club, there was no political nonsense there we kept that out, my god I'm so glad the club wasn't about in the last 10 years with the politics in America the way they are. But if you were there, you were one of us.

I think it's a testament to how organic the scene was and how racially diverse the bands were at Castle Heights given they were all coming from local racially diverse boroughs of NYC...

It certainly was, today there's so much you need to think about with regards to 'political correctness' or 'wokeism' or whatever you want to call it but back then we never had any issues like that. Everyone came together, we did benefit shows for 9/11 and people of all backgrounds came together to support it, I always thought the Hardcore scene did a great job of being inclusive.

From a historical point, 9/11 was a huge deal for many of the bands that regularly played Castle Heights that actually reflected in their music, most notably with Sworn Enemy on the track 'Sworn Enemy', Irate track 'NYC March 11, 2002' etc

Kevin w/ Irate, Inhuman and Sworn Enemy. Pic: John the Doorman



Very true, it was a very scary time, that was towards the end of Castle's life, it brought a lot of people together and united people, a very emotional time. Bands were breaking down on stage tearing up, everyone there knew someone who either died or was injured that day, crazy to think that all happened over 20 years ago at this stage.

What was your favourite thing someone said about Castle Heights?

Rob Moran from **EGH** once said that Castle Heights was like a dojo, you learn your skills, you learn your craft, if you can cut it here you can cut it anywhere. It was a tough room and a tough crowd, if you can build yourself and go over there, you can kill it anywhere. I always give Rob credit for that.

I know you said in another interview that the last week of Castle Heights was marred with issues...

It wasn't pretty that last year. There was huge brawl at the **Darkside NYC/Irate** show that meant **Irate** never got to play which was gutting for them, one of our top bands never got to play a last show there. Hated every minute of it, John the doorman got hospitalised, just a shit ending. One bit of advice I would give to anyone is don't ever over advertise the final shows, what happens is a couple of knuckle heads will think 'oh hey, it's over anyway so let's fuck shit up' whereas other people were like no you respect the place and go out with respect and class. Unfortunately, a lot of people went with the former idea and they got the spotlight and ruined everything. We stayed open for a couple of days, had a party where bands like **Agnostic Front** guys came down, but no final show, just a get together. We let people take memorabilia, like **Mastodon** have one of the gargoyles from the place still on their tour bus to this day, but we didn't go out in the best light.

When Castle Heights closed in November 2002 due to the landlord jacking up the rates, what was your feelings at the time seeing as you spent near a decade working there?

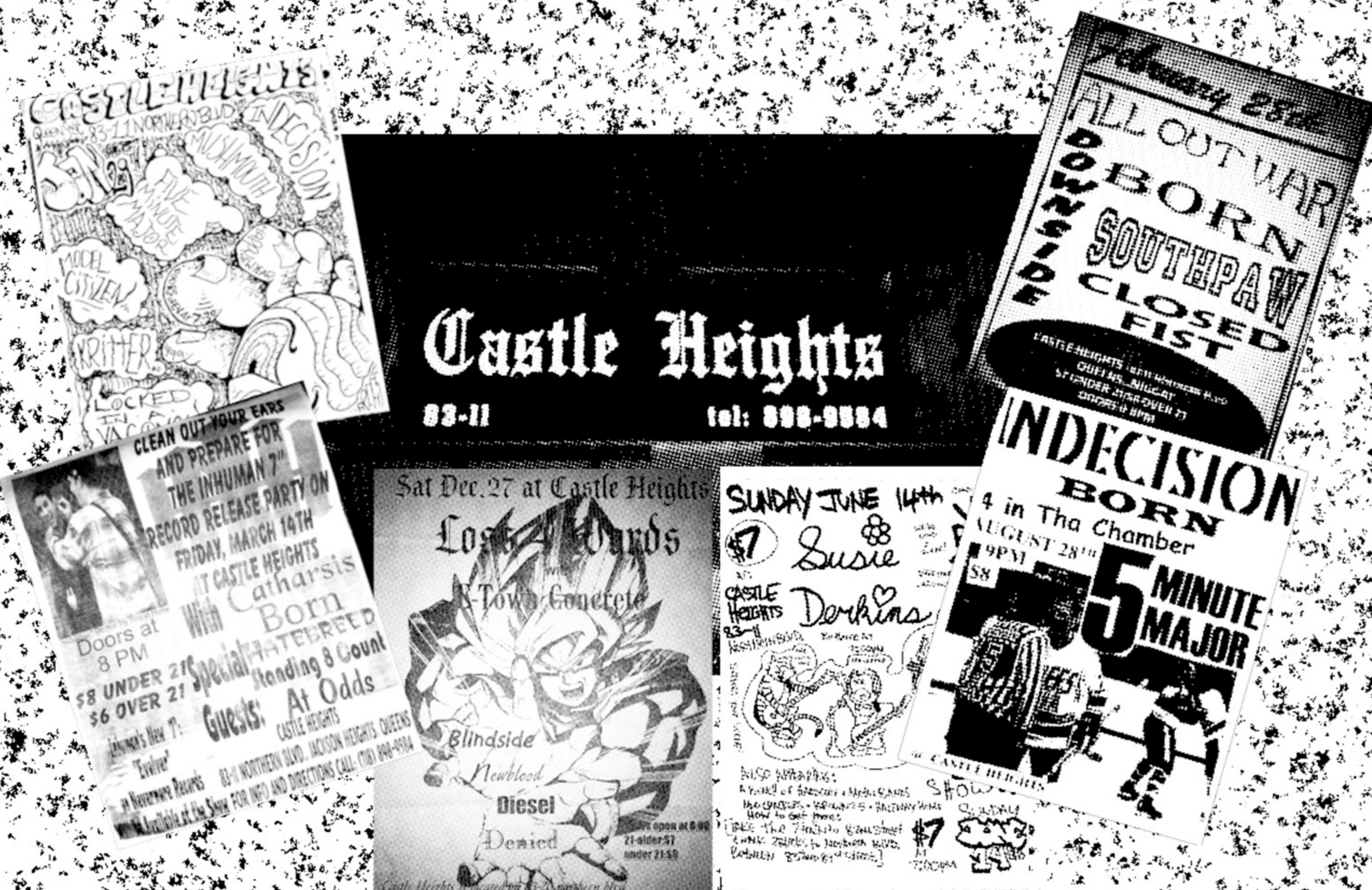
I remember the cab ride home from the last show and thinking 'what am I going to fucking do now?'. It was really an end of an era, I'm sure the band guys you interviewed will have said the same thing, "what was the hot club after Castle Heights in Queens?" I'm sure anyone who was there will honestly tell there wasn't one afterwards. A couple tried and lasted the length of a cup of coffee, and everything that was around at the same time closed down, nothing lasts forever but nothing filled that void Castle left.

Barry from Goatamentise said there was a get together at the club after it was changed into a restaurant and it felt bad, what was your feelings?

Oh that was sad, it became a tapas bar called La Tasca. We had a get together there, just a little reunion. An actual tidbit of info is that building that was Castle Heights burned down like 10 years ago, it's rebuilt now, not sure what it is, I was thinking about stopping over soon as people are talking about maybe doing a video retrospective thing in front of it. Someone even said that if they bought the building would you run it again and I answered not in that location, absolutely not. Jackson Heights is just a different ball game now, they would not want a rock club in that area these days, grand opening grand closing as Chris Rock would say.

Seeing as it's 20 years since Castle Heights closed its doors, what do you think of people still wanting to talk about Castle Heights still? And do you have any ideas for celebrating it?

So this November we will be doing the Castle Heights 20 year anniversary shows and we will be making sure to make up for what should've happened 20 years ago. It's going to be called the 'Castle Heights Classics'. We are all older, we won't have the same issues we did back then, dare I say the trouble makers from back then are not around or alive. Can't announce who will be playing but you will hear soon about it, it will be a celebration, we're going to have reunions, could be a 15-minute set and that's it or a full comeback we don't know. Just for fun, no money grab, just a gathering of friends, Key Castle is still about with all the staff and a new room so why not. We're still here, so while we are here, let's do it, we shouldn't be waiting while we could lose some more people.





TOM MURPHY

Main man behind the kit of two of the **FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH** bands **5 Minute Major** & **EGH**, Tom Murphy kept a beat to all of the madness unfolding on many a dancefloor across the world.

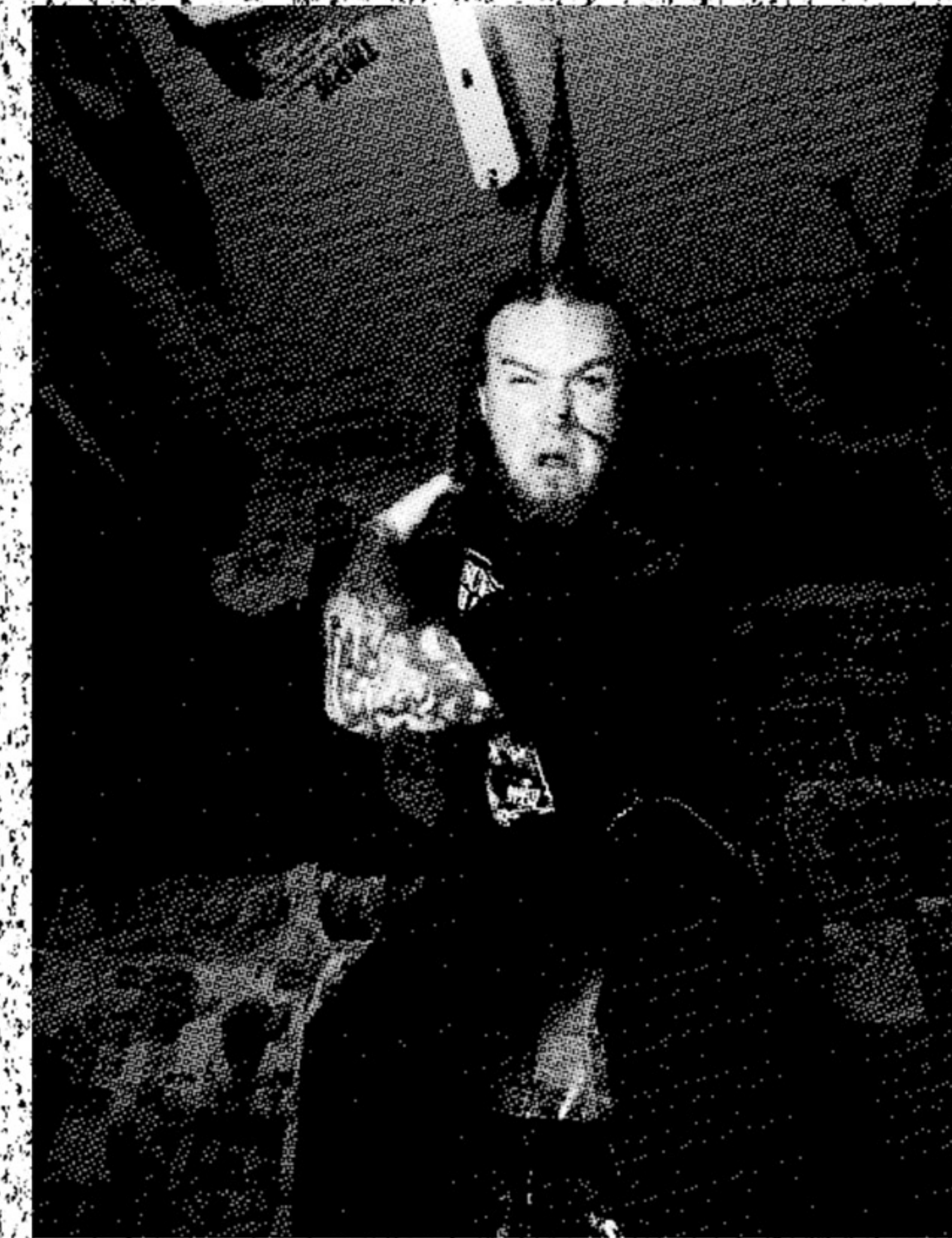
Prior to getting into the interview, Tom told me had just burned a bunch of old photos and flyers from Castle Heights days a week ago which was painful to hear, as I'm sure they would've fit well in this zine. This interview was conducted over an Instagram call on 30th January 2022....

Thanks for doing this Tom, proper appreciate it. Just to start and build a bit of context, what age did you discover Metal/Hardcore and when did you start drumming?

So I grew up in family of 9, my father taught me drums, my sister piano... he was trying to teach us all an instrument but then started having to many kids so stopped after us. I had some old war drum I would practice on that he gave me, when I was in 3rd grade I asked for a drum kit and he told me to get a fuckin job so I was a paperboy in 3rd grade, bought myself one drum, had a bar stool and some plastic bits for cymbals to practice on. I didn't really play properly until I was like 20 when I first moved to Astoria, it was 1994 and I went to see **Godflesh** open for **Type O Negative & Danzig**, they only played 2 songs but I thought "yo I could do this shit!". Not long after we started **Inside Job** with my friend Sinead and then he left, Fat Cat joined and that basically became **5 Minute Major**. I never really learned properly how to play drums as you can tell by listening to my playing haha. Think the first metal I heard was **Ozzy Osbourne** - Blizzard of Ozz, NWOBHM, **Judas Priest** and that was it when I was 13.

Do you remember your first HC show and the impact it left?

I went and saw **Anthrax** play The Beacon Theatre in Manhattan supporting Among The Living LP in 1987 and the **Cro Mags** opened up for them, I knew the **Cro Mags** from mixtapes I had been given before but this was like my first show ever and John Joseph was running around back and forth, never seen anything like it. I thought at the time that was the shit.



When was the first time you went to Castle Heights?

I liked Castle Heights from the beginning, everyone from the Bronx, Queens, everywhere coming together, no one knew each other but we were all figuring each other out on the dancefloor, seeing who can take it and not be a bitch about it.

Your first band was called **INSIDE JOB** that later morphed into **5 MINUTE MAJOR**, what was the story behind this band and what were your influences?

Yeah end of 1994, we recorded an **Inside Job** 4 song demo in Corona, Queens, still figuring out how to play, learning that a drum is the only thing you can hit with no consequences haha. The guitarists and bassist loved **Leeway** back then which I fucking hated cause I didn't like the singing, so that was their major influence. I ended up loving that album 'Open Mouth Kiss' much later where they have like **Ozzy Osbourne** production on it. Yeah those guys were big into **Leeway**, I don't know if they were 'borrowing' riffs like many people like to do, they were also into **Snapcase**, which I wasn't into them at the time either. Then when Kevin came in and we changed to **5MM**, he was big into **Killing Time & Breakdown**, my first 'official' HC show was **Breakdown** in some shitty club with some crappy punk bands. Always loved Jeff's vocals and lyrics. Bill Ward from Sabbath was a big influence on my drumming, though I can't play swing to save my life haha.

(we proceeded to talk about our shared love and fandom for Black Sabbath for a good 10mins....)



What sort of shows were you guys playing at this time, specifically around Castle Heights?

We played like PA, MA, CT, Baltimore... Baltimore was always fun, you want to talk about wild wild west, if you want to get into trouble without getting into trouble go Baltimore haha.

I've actually played Baltimore twice, there's always something crazy going on....

Where did you play the Side Bar?

Uhh first time I toured the US we played Charm City Art space which I don't think exists anymore?

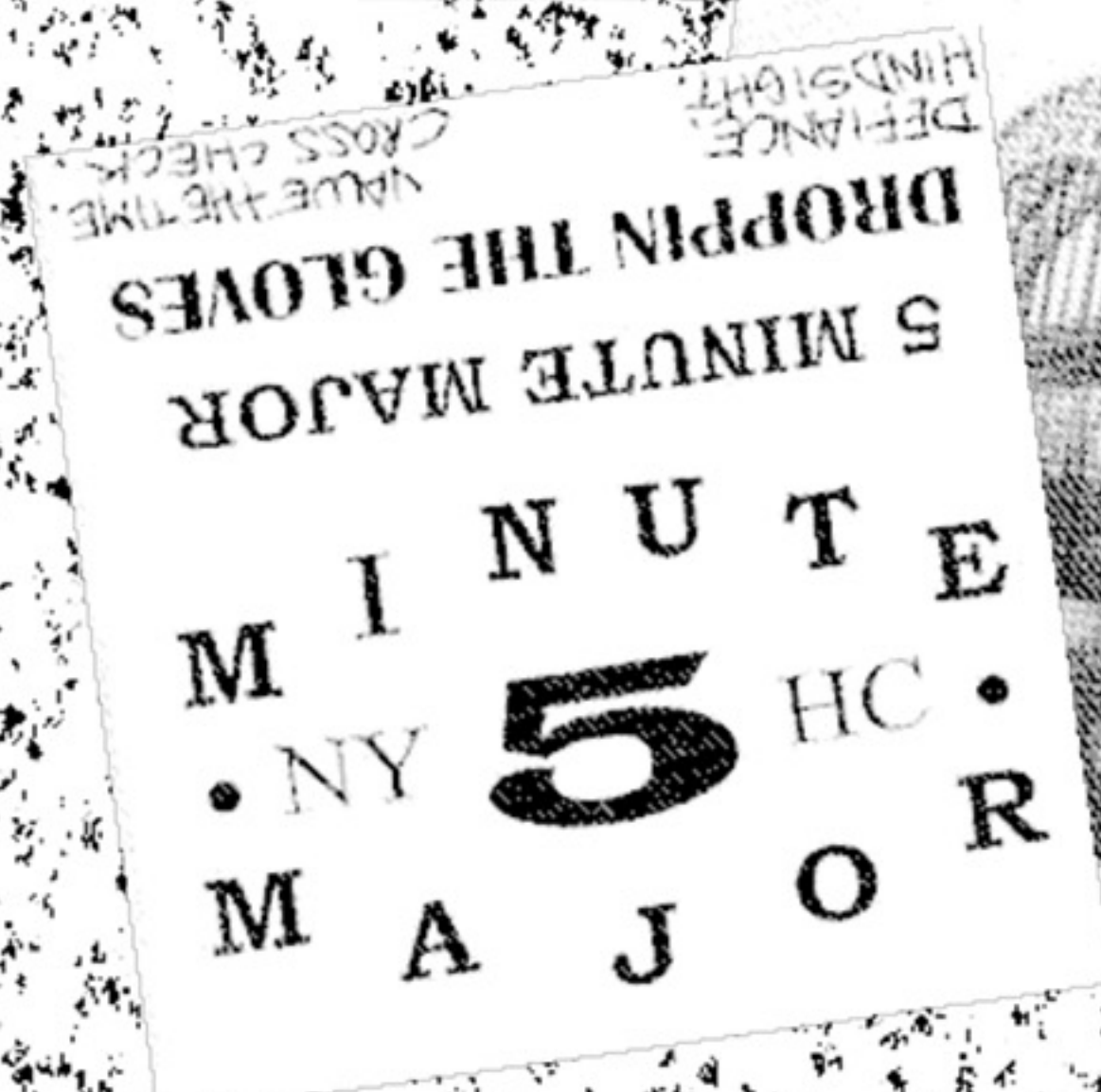
Next to the gay bar?

Oh I didn't know there was gay bar next to it haha

One of the last Red Eyed Devil shows we played was Charm City Artspace and I got so drunk in the gaybar before, waitress kept giving me these full rocks full of whisky, there's a vid of us playing it on youtube somewhere, it's pretty terrible I keep dropping the sticks, I don't even remember playing it. We drove all the way back to NY that night I don't know how, we were all fucked up, Rob was pissed... but yeah great spot haha



So first time we played there was the Fall Brawl with, **One Second Thought, Stout, 5MM, Cold Front, EGH, Breakdown...** that was great time it was an abandoned building and they setup a show in there, we were hoping the whole show the cops wouldn't shut it down. **Breakdown** was about to go on, **EGH** got into a streetfight across the road covered in mace, they came running into the building, Mike Dijan tells Jeff to go into 'Streetfight' and they all come in the pit covered in mace hahaha. Every time you go to Baltimore there's something wild going on



Was it just kinda weekend warrior type stuff you were doing?

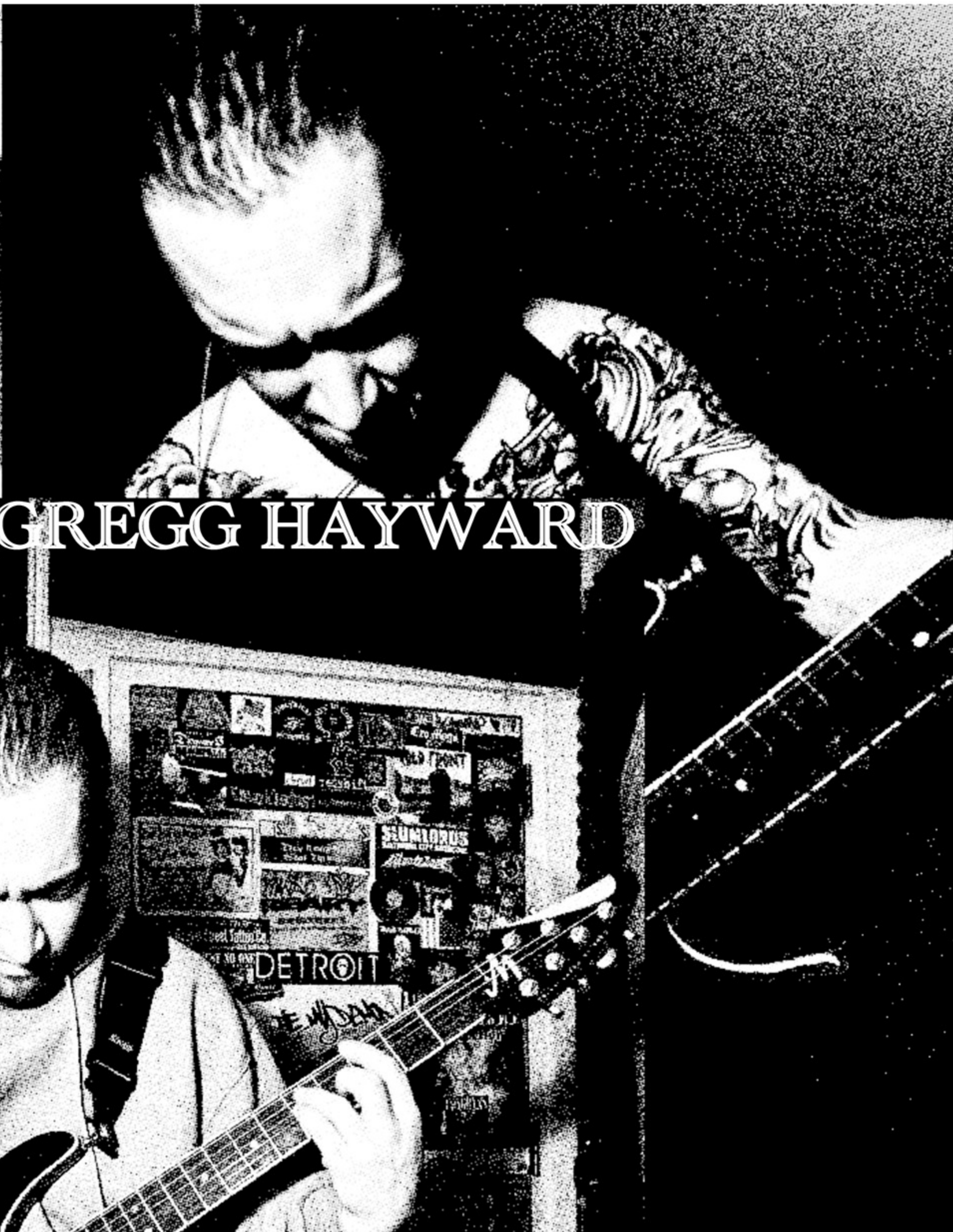
Oh totally weekend warrior we couldn't tour we had jobs, had to pay rent etc. 5MM was going to tour Japan but that's about the time our guitarist and bassist left the band, then Eric was stressed about going over, we weren't getting on either, the tour would've been us getting trains everywhere so it would've been a bad time had we had done it haha.

5MM released a demo in 1998 followed by the 'When It Ends' CD on Inner Rage records, what was the recording like for this and what was the reaction to it dropping at the time?

We recorded the 'Dropping the Gloves' demo with Mike Dijan, went to a spot in Manhattan to record that, Mike Dijan was a contractor so he would build all these studios and then be able to hook up these places for his friends on the cheap. Mike pretty much worked on everything we did, I think he hooked us up for 'When It Ends' CD. Nah actually Jimmy Gestapo hooked us up for that, the two guys who recorded it were doing it as a favour to him at a special price but it was during the Super Bowl and those guys didn't want to be so they didn't even mic up the kit properly on that recording. Which sucks because I played well on that session, so you can't really hear the drums on that.

I did see a vid recently of you guys in 1999 with Chris Bee from EGH filling in on bass...

Oh yeah and Tony from BCS on guitar and then Gary on bass, wow I forgot all about that... I saw 90's HC Instagram page just post a pic of 5MM of us all in front of Kevin's old Subaru that we all almost died in. I was driving us all drunk and on Xanax falling asleep at the wheel ahaha.



R.I.P 'LIL' GREGG HAYWARD

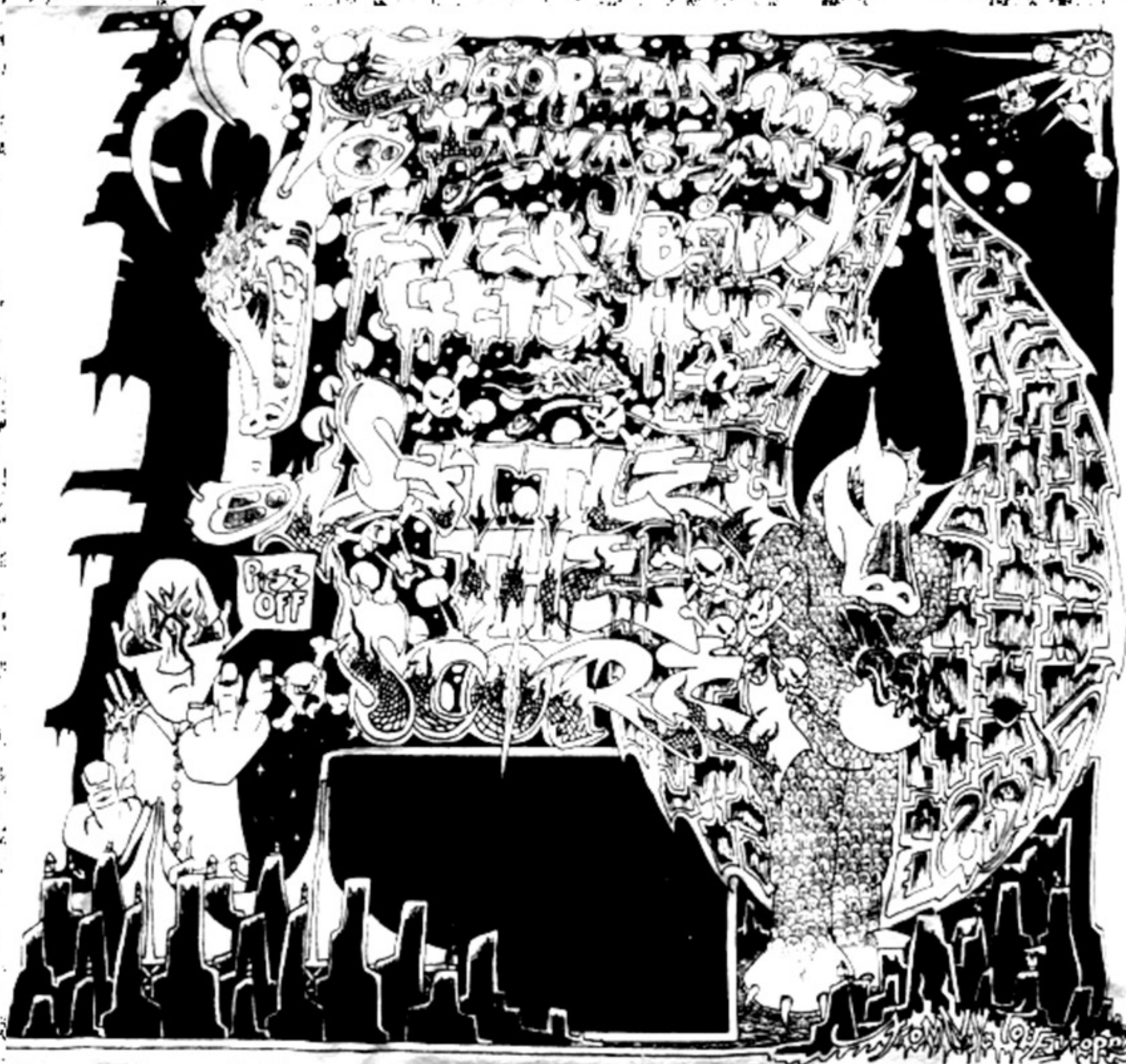


In and around 2000/2001 5 Minute Major break up, what was the reason for this?

Our guitarist and bassist quit the band before we recorded 'When It Ends' so Eric recorded bass and guitars for the whole album, and then he ended up quitting. He was like in **One Second Thought, Denied**, he was playing for everyone at one point he was like the hired gun. So we break up like 2002, never really official or anything.

You told me you presumably around this time join EGH to fill in for a tour, what tour was this and how long did your fill in job last?

I joined as a favour to Pauley No-Neck their drummer who played on the first CD. EGH had just booked this mammoth European tour, Chris Bee took all the money from the sales of that first CD and bought flights, equipment etc and then Pauley got the offer to play in **Sworn Enemy** on the Ozzfest tour and wanted to do that. He was like 'yo you gotta join the band to help me or these guys are going to fuck me up!' so here I am 30 years old never got on a plane before, never left New York or the tri state area, never thought I'd ever go to Europe. I had a month to learn the setlist and I sucked so bad and we were headlining it was horrible! We only had 6 songs, I mean EGH is a trainwreck live anyway but a trainwreck with a drummer who can't play is even worse haha. Though I couldn't believe I was in Europe through music, I can barely play the drums, but we did it, it was quite the experience. We did that for a month.



The Japan tour which was documented on the Guerrilla Warfare Fanzine DVD Vol. 3 looks like a WILD time, what were some of the highlights from that tour?

When we went, it was during the SARS virus, we were the only ones on the plane, first time I'd seen all the mask wearing shit. We got first class treatment, video games, movies, food, whole rows to ourselves, that was really cool. Those shows were huge, the guy who brought us over normally brings over huge bands like Metallica, we were on an 11 man tour bus, first class seats.... It shouldn't of happened but it did. I had no money on that tour so I just sold 5MM CDs and shirts so I could eat, they love 5MM over there I'd put them out and in seconds, gone. We were in Kyoto playing a bar called Whoopies this lil shithole, first time ever as a band where the crowd was louder than the band singing, we were playing 'Weightless' and the crowd was louder than the band singing the 'GOD, SAVE ME' part. Totally threw us off, we were like 'wow they actually like us out here!'. We had Tomoki on guitar and this girl called Jessica on vocals, 2 vocalists, we get back from that tour and Jessica is kicked out for getting too much attention and Tomoki quits cause he was tired of bs. So after that EGH is just me, Rob and Chris.

Crazy thinking about how EGH self-released that CD themselves to make an impact in Japan...

Yeah I was around for the recording of most of that CD, backup vocals etc. Pauley had to record that song 'Sad Sickness' about 11 times to get it right, but fair fucks made him a better player.

I did hear from another interview that Pauley had to learn how to play to a click track for the first time when he was recording the 2nd Sworn Enemy album....

Yep Mike Gook (**Cold As Life**) was in them then, he would force him to sit and learn double bass, they would make him play **Cro Mags** first LP over and over to get chops down. It made him a better player. I think a turning point for him was when playing in Europe a soundman came to him after the show and said "I've never heard a double bass sound like a flat tyre before" and it was like "that's it!"

I know there was some mental tour with EGH, Irate, Billy Club & Sworn Enemy in Puerto Rico at some point?

Oh yeah... it was like 2/3 day thing they flew us all in, stayed at like this porno fuck hotel, all the rooms had heart shaped Jacuzzis, disco lights, mirrors on ceilings. I had the worst weed there, it was disgusting, it wasn't even weed... luckily I brought acid so it was fine we were all tripping out. Had to made sure everyone had a good time.

You played on the 2nd EGH CD "It Is What It Is"? What can you tell us about the recording and writing for this CD?

A lot of those songs were written with Steve on guitar, week before we were going to do Europe again with Furyfest, Pressure Fest etc he quit the band, because his new Japanese wife he met on the Japan tour said he can't tour no more. Lil Gregg came back in the band after he was kicked out when he was 16, cause he didn't have any money to give to the band ahah. So my friends sister works at an airline and bumrushes him a makeshift passport, we have a week to go through the songs. So me, Gregg and Chris Bee every night for a week at the band spot practice to get the songs down. Then we go out on tour, and he did pretty good, way better than I did on my first tour.

After that tour we were writing for the CD and then Chris moved to London like 'see ya later' and we were just like 'do we change the name of the band? Do we carry on the band?' But we carry on writing, so it's just me, Rob and Lil Gregg. We originally record this CD in Manhattan and Lil Gregg was doing like 17 guitar tracks on every song it was nuts, but Chris Bee but the kibosh on it saying 'it's too much'. I'm currently working on getting that session back so I can work on it cause Gregg's playing on that is something else. Anyway one day I said fuck it and we just recorded the record again at our practice space. Rob, Steve and Gregg have this band on the side called **Terror Ave** and they had some songs they never recorded, the song 'Economics' was a **Terror Ave** song originally. 'Through The Sands of Time' was written by Lil Gregg when he was 16 when he was originally in EGH, that was like an instrumental. 'Clean Slate' that girl Jessica wrote the lyrics for that. It was all odds and ends thrown together to make that record. "Sunset in Osaka" is a song Rob wrote at the end of the Japan tour just kinda being like "oh shit, we can actually do this!" and the band could work etc. There's a hidden track on that CD with no bass on it because Chris said it was the gayest thing he ever heard and refused to put bass on it but Rob came in, one take all the vocals, pretty amazing as it's all about his life. Harley Flannagan is also on the record uncredited on the track 'No Compromise', we were actually going to use a photo of his two kids as the album cover after Jimmy Gestapo hooked us up. Jimmy D also helped me put the album layout together, I was over at his house every night for weeks putting that together on his computer. Chris had to be flown in from London to do that CD, he wanted it to be 7 tracks, he hates that record, he didn't think it was a proper EGH album, maybe it wasn't because we weren't all together to write it.

I have a lot of friends who are in their early 20s who are fascinated with the sound of that record, especially the guitar tone.

See they hate it over here and say it sounds too thin! Lil Gregg had two guitars, a Stratocaster with a Primus sticker was his main one that he used for most the recording, mainly because the whammy didn't fall out on that one. But he had that, a green Ibanez and a Schecter I think.

Their have been a number of bands over here in the UK who now cite that CD as a big influence..

Oh yeah? I always thought the popularity of the 1st album would smother that album, I didn't believe anyone liked 'It Is What It Is' that's crazy.

What did you guys do in support of that CD?

I don't think we played any shows after that coming out, Chris was gone and he never came back and that was that pretty much.

Red Eyed Devil was formed in the absence of EGH with a Demo released in 2009, was the idea to carry on a lot of the musical ideas that were done on the previous EGH CD?

Yes a lot of those songs were left off 'It Is What It Is', we wrote a lot in that time. We had the song 'Red Eyed Devil' so Rob just said let's call the band that as a temporary thing to see if Chris would come back. What we should have done was kept it under **Everybody Gets Hurt** name cause it was just a continuation of the last CD. The song 'Corrupt Her' was originally an unrecorded **Terror Ave** song, the song 'Unconditional' was supposed to be an EGH song and have like 'E' 'G' 'H' shouted over the intro. Like all those songs were EGH songs basically, just a bit better and more progressive. I know Rob later wished we had just kept EGH as the name just cause it would've been easier to tour and get the release out there.

You recently put the Red Eyed Devil album 'Consequences of Time' on streaming as of last week January 2022 (released in 2011), what can you tell us about the recording of this release?

Yeah I had a guy from CD baby call me up about that cause I'm a retard with no computer, doing this all on my phone so it should be on streaming. They were toning down Gregg on that record, he was going crazy!



Was there a 'last show' for EGH or did you just simply go quiet?

In Chris' mind the band is still together haha, nah no last show. I flew into play a show in Brooklyn when I was living in California once but that was the last time we all played a show together. Then they played the Black N Blue bowl later and that was a disaster, I told them before then I was never going to play in them again and that's the last time they all played together as far as I know.



Just to wrap up here before my phone battery dies, my drummer wanted to ask if are you a blunt guy or a paper guy?

Papers man, straight pure.

And what's your favourite strain?

Purple poison, sativas... love the hazes too.



I put the link to that record in my group chat the other day saying 'yo if you like EGH, this is kinda like the secret EGH 3rd album....'

Yeah it's funny you were saying 'It Is What It Is' is having a resurgence with younger kids, I always thought the Red Eyed Devil CD would have a life long after it's release cause of the musicianship. Some of the younger IDS guys didn't really like it at the time cause of the lyrical content I think, "Self Medicated" is a song about me, "Self Imposed Exile" is about Rob moving to the Suburbs and starting a family. "Angels Wrath" is a **Terror Ave** song about Lil Gregg. We were idiots and we signed to **BDHW** records in Germany for that release, they had all the iTunes rights etc on the condition that they would book us to tour the album in Europe. We got an offer to tour and then our bassist quit, whole lot of personal things were going on and then Lil Gregg died at that time too. We were supposed to play a show that same night too.

Did Red Eyed Devil - Demo 2 come out in 2012 just before Lil Greggs untimely passing?

Yeah we put that out then, the song 'Warp Spasm' was another old **Terror Ave** song musically. Yeah forgot about that demo, Rob was pissed off that he named a song 'Flash Mob' and then some TV show came out not long after called Flash Mob.

I feel like Red Eyed Devil is the hidden gem band of the EGH universe...

I don't think anyone knows about it, I remember the IDS kids at the time weren't feeling it cause it weren't like the heavy chugga chugga beatdown shit that was popular at the time. Like **Lines of Scrimmage** or what was the band you had over there... **Six Ft Ditch**. That music was just simple to understand whereas Red Eyed Devil was like "what the fuck". I understand why it was popular but if they knew our tunes... they'd know when it came in to go off you know.



Guerrilla Warfare

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away called 'PRE YOUTUBE WORLD', finding live Hardcore videos was not as easy as typing in current band name into Instagram and finding multiple story videos of a show they played the night before. Video fanzines such as GUERRILLA WARFARE were godsend for anyone interested in seeing what the early 2000s New York/New Jersey scenes had to offer 20 years ago, with a lot of the bands featured being Castle Heights regulars.

Some kind souls have uploaded all 3 entries of the GUERRILLA WARFARE series on youtube, so grab a cherry Pepsi max, scan the QR codes below, load this on your TVs and enjoy...



GUERRILLA WARFARE #1: SPECIAL NORTH JERSEY EDITION

The first of the series centering on North New Jersey, featuring **NJ BLOODLINE**, **REDLINE**, **RESTITUTION**, **UNSOUND**, **DECEMBER AETERNALIS**, **FLAT EARTH SOCIETY**, **SUPERTOUCH**, **IMPMODE**, and **TEARS OF FRUSTRATION**. Real hardcore is **NJ Bloodline** and **Supertouch** being on the same of compilation, some of the interviews are very funny, some cool **Redline** footage playing Castle Heights.

GUERRILLA WARFARE #2: DIVERSITY

The second of the series and more infamous, featuring **SHATTERED REALM**, **THIS DAY FORWARD**, **INHUMAN**, **MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD**, **THE ASSISTANT**, **KILL YOUR IDOLS**, **ON THE RISE & EVERYBODY GETS HURT**. If the song 'All Will Suffer' wasn't brutal enough on its own to make it one of the most covered HC songs in the last 20 years, the music video on this certainly did it. Legendary **EGH** footage, the filler 'storyline' acting is in that same tier as 'Edge of Quarrel' also the small coverage on NY fanzines like **Guillotine & In Effect** is very cool for the screen grab content alone.



Guerrilla Warfare #3: Never Give Up/World War III Tour of Japan

The third and possibly the most known of the series. Featuring **BILLY CLUB SANDWICH**, **SUBZERO**, **IRATE**, **ENSIGN**, **MURPHY'S LAW**. If the 'Suckerpunch' music video wasn't legendary enough, then the 'Vendetta' music video just cements this DVD as some of the most god tier HC footage ever captured, unbelievably violent and unbelievably rewatchable. The interviews at NYHC Tattoo shop, Chris Bee from EGH and Kentax are all very cool. The Afro Punk mini doc is weirdly put in here, doesn't really fit the vibe of the rest of the DVD. Never Give Up is paired with a tour documentary of **EVERYBODY GETS HURT** touring Japan in 2003, some insane footage of EGH playing as well as tour mates **TJ MAXX & SETTLE THE SCORE**. If you don't want to chuck a chair out your front window to the 'Goon Squad' music video, we are clearly not the same.

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Breakdown @ Castle Heights (May 23rd 1998) Photos: Carl Gunhouse





After the smoke clears and the dust settles, we are left with one mission: speaking to the legendary Phil Vibe from the mighty mighty **Irate**, **The Judas Syndrome** and **Knights of The Black**.

This zoom interview happened on the 4th April 2022.

To start, I know you have stated in other interviews that hearing **Guns N Roses** on the radio was a starting point for you musically, when was the first time you heard a band you knew was **Hardcore** and what was your first **Hardcore** show?

First hardcore band I remember listening to was **Biohazard**. They fucked up my brain because they had equal parts metal with this street edge that I later learned was hardcore. Very street, very tough, very urban, they looked just like everyone on my block in Bronx, I wanted to be like them. Then later I discover **Madball** like a trickle effect, all of **Biohazard**'s friends bands like **Bulldoze**, **25 Ta Life** etc started discovering all those bands.

First show I went to was in the Bronx, I went to see a friend of mine's Death Metal band, it was a mixed bill so there was thrash metal, death metal, hardcore bands all on one bill. **Close Call** and **Without A Cause** were also on this show, who were Bronx hardcore bands, **Close Call** later became **District 9**. **Close Call** blew me away, I'd never seen hardcore dancing before like windmills and picking up change etc, they were so crazy. That really resonated with me and so did the energy so I started going CBGBs, Coney Island High, Wetlands every week which I got a great education in music from.

Barry from Goatamentise cited **Close Call** as well as a gateway into **Hardcore** with them being neighbourhood dudes...

Yeah it was inspiring seeing these neighbourhood dudes playing rock from the Bronx, there was a core group of people playing this sort of music from the Bronx like **Goatamentise**, **District 9** that loved heavy music. They were a big part of **Irate** getting to play shows early.

Did you get any grief from neighbourhood kids in the Bronx for wearing metal t-shirts out and about?

Not from my neighbourhood, I knew everyone so, you'd get some weird looks like 'what's this guy looking like' but nothing outside of that. Going to other neighbourhoods though, people might say something on the street and either you say 'fuck you' or you get into it and they knew never to fuck with you again, cause we're from the Bronx you know, that's how you we got down back then. But I had a similar experience to Barry, not many fights or incidents, I stuck to my group of people and my neighbourhood respected that.

Not sure if this was a bit later but I know from the **Irate** demo thanks list the 'BDC' gets thanked that stood for **Boogie Down Crew**, was this a crew of your guys you formed in these early days?

BDC was a coming together of some incredibly talented Bronx bands looking to put the Bronx on the map. We were just a bunch of bands from the Bronx that played together whether it was a BBQ, shows at Castle etc, it was just a bunch of good people, good times, no bs, no drama. There was lots of Bronx bands outside the main ones like **Blackout**, **Billy Club**, **Sandwich**, **Driven By Hatred**, **Rights Reserved**, **Proof of Purchase**, so many bands. We just came together, lots of good friendships and lots of good memories.



Did you try out or do any bands prior to Irate? Do you remember what you guys were called?

Me and Nando had a band in high school that we used to jam about in, we didn't have a name for the longest time but towards the end we called ourselves **Fatality**, as a result of playing too much Mortal Kombat. Years later there was a band from the Bronx called Fatality, but we were way before them. We just jammed, we never played any shows I don't think. After that disbanded, Nando started jamming with Nick and UV Rayz and after a month or two Nando called me and told me this new band he's doing is really cool and asked me to come down and try out as a vocalist. I was blown away with what they were writing.

When you were asked to try out as a vocalist for Irate, did the guys explain what they were tryna go for musically for the band?

I don't think we ever spoke about what genre it would be, we all had a lot of the same influences and just bled out into the writing, it just came together naturally. There was no set formula though I will say we were all metalheads, I will always say **Irate** is a metal band but we had enough urban influences like **Biohazard** to an already metal band from the Bronx.

Did you ever label this as 'Bronx Deathcore' alongside bands like Goatamentise were also doing?

Yeah I mean they were definitely a first around that, when I think of BDC I think Bronx Deathcore, I'd put Irate in that mix.

To me with what was happening previously in NYHC with bands like Darkside NYC, Merauder, Confusion, All Out War etc, you guys were taking that sound of early Deathcore and pushing the extremity that much further...

Right, we were all big fans of those bands, you were absorbing all that at the time. New York is such a huge melting pot of music, you take it all in man, metalheads at punk shows, hardcore kids at metal shows etc. When you have an open mind, good thing will happen. We never put labels on Irate but it had to be heavy and they were definitely some of the bands we were consuming.

When it came to doing vocals, who and what was inspiring your style of vocals? You sound obviously death metal inspired but still clear enough to make out what you were saying like a HC vocalist?

Irate was definitely big on clarity. Me, Nando and Nick were writing lyrics and was always stressed that the delivery had to be clear, I wanted that for myself as well. It's still a priority to me this day, it's something we worked on tirelessly. We were very strict on that it had to be clear.

I know the first time you went Castle Heights was the first time you played it in September 1996, also the first Irate show. Who was on that show and what sort of impression did the place leave on you?

So first time we played there we played with **Dehumanized**, a legendary band in their own right in the early 'Slam' Death Metal scene, another band called **Trauma** also played. The week leading to that show I was so nervous, I couldn't believe I was going to perform in front of people finally, I was getting nauseous trying to remember the lyrics. Even backstage at Castle I wanted to throw up. Once I got on stage though and saw the guys rocking out, a switch was flipped and Phil Vaquez became Phil Vibes that night. We played in front of 30-40 kids, a lot of them were our friends and they went nuts for us and that kept happening show after show.

Did you feel an instant connection with the place and the bands who were frequenting the place?

Yeah, I'd never been to a Queens spot before, that was the first one for me and it became home for us. I really dug the atmosphere, it was dingy, but you knew good, violent things were going to happen in that room.

Speaking to Kevin Castle, he said when 'Burden of a Crumbling Society' EP came out it was a hit at the time, what do you remember about the writing and recording of that first CD?

Recording that was a really good time, we had already done 2 songs for a compilation at this place in Upstate NY with Jean Christophe, who would later record every Irate release we did. So we booked in with him to record the EP with him, lot of cool sessions, lot of drinking but we were really serious when it came to recording, we wouldn't let it affect the performances. We were all so young and excited. Sonically it's a bit rough around the edges but I have very fond memories of recording that EP, it's in my DNA and the DNA of the band.

Did any labels come sniffing around you dropping that EP or was it to always self-release it?

We went with self-releasing coming on to the scene just because that's what you did to get noticed by labels. We were building a nice reputation for ourselves in the tri state area cause we were playing a lot, then when we had the EP release party at Castle Heights we sold it out, it was insane, that's possibly the best show we ever played. The energy, the anticipation in the room, such an amazing night. I still watch the footage back from that show now and again and just remember how great it was.



Do you remember who else played that show?

Honestly, I can't remember unfortunately. I'm going to say **Billy Club Sandwich** definitely played that night though.

Did you do any tours around the EP/demo days? Or was it like weekend warrior stuff?

Mostly weekend warrior, we did it religiously though every weekend. We would drive out as far as we could when we could. Then in 2001 we started getting the tour offers and started really pushing the band.

Irate live at Castle Heights. Photo: Tom Murphy





Irate in Japan 2001



You leave Irate for a period around 1999 when Irate actually get another singer for a year before you return for the 11:34 CD album, what was the feeling around re-joining and the MO behind recording that CD?

When I re-joined, the goal was to get out there more than previous certainly.

When I left, there wasn't beef between the band and me but there were certainly some feelings involved, but we're brothers, through the good and bad, so prior to me re-joining we were hanging out again. It wasn't working out well with their replacement singer, so one night in a bar in New York we all met up and spewed our guts out to each other, pointed out what didn't work previously and what we wanted to work, it was very emotional. They invite me back into the band which I was hoping they would, we just hit the ground running and had some of the best years with the band. Musically they had already written the 11:34 album so there were already those songs for me to come in and start to mess with right away and then I wrote my contributions. We rented a studio out in Lower East side of Manhattan and recorded there with Jean Christophe with some parts also recorded in Upstate NY. It was a great time, I think for Irate fans they love all our stuff but 11:34 is THE album, my personal favourite is New York Metal CD, it has everything I wanted from the band.

Did anyone offer to put this CD out? I find it crazy you self-released all your CDs. If they did, which labels were interested?

Yeah, what hurt us was when I left the band, a deal was on the table with a label called Spitfire who was doing **Crowbar**, **Testament** etc at the time. We didn't agree to it and I left the band so there was some negative energy towards us after that. We got offered deals from labels, but the deals were not going to take care of us the way we would've liked so we decided to stay on our own terms and do it ourselves.

It's strange to me that you guys were self-releasing your CDs as were EGH & Billy Club when another band in the same scene SWORN ENEMY put their first EP out on Stillborn and then got picked up by Elektra on their first album.

Were Stillborn interested at all?

We had a great relationship with Jamey Jasta, I still call him a friend to this day. There may have been some flirtations with the prospect of something happening, but it didn't happen for whatever reason, not sure why. But we didn't have the time to worry about it, we were so focused on just getting the name out there and playing that we didn't stop to think about whether a label would pick us up or not. We would've liked it to have happened, but we don't regret it not happening.

You guys toured outside the USA for the first time in 2001, how did those tours go? Do you remember anything specifically about The Underworld, London show you played?

So we played with **Beatdown Fury** and **50 Calibre** at The Underworld, **50 Calibre** covered Transcendence at the show, we were stood around the venue like 'what the fuck is this!', so that song got played twice that night. It was so cool, we had no idea they would do that. That show was great, London is very much like New York but British, their own flavour. That tour was a great experience, it was the first time I had left the USA, first time touring, a lot of firsts on that tour. A great education on touring, how unglamorous it was, sleeping on stranger's floors etc. You never forget your first. **Knuckledust** were like our London brother band, we had so many great times together. I wish I could've been at that anniversary show they played recently. Shout outs to Pierre, Wemar, Nicky and the gang.

I know you toured Japan in 2001, what was that like? My best friend is dating an older woman from Japan who has footage from your Tokyo show that they are currently digitising to put online.

Really? I humbly ask you send that my way as soon as you have that footage to hand. Talk about a humble people, touring Japan was amazing. It was a month after 9/11, we nearly got stuck out there as no flights were going back into the USA. We played 4 sold out shows, everyone there made such an effort to speak to us in English and sing the songs and know the material, it was unbeatable. You feel different over there, you can maybe blend in as an American in Europe until you open your mouth but over there you just stick out. People generally were so nice to us over there. Lots of cool bands over there too, they had **Dying Race**, **Numb**, their scene was really thriving at that time, we were lucky to go over when we did.

Me and my friends love that era of Japanese Hardcore of the early 2000s, they somewhat had a similar sound to what was happening at Castle Heights...

Yeah man like those two bands **Dying Race** and **Numb** could've easily played Castle Heights, they had a very similar sound.

Castle Heights closed its doors in 2002, how did you feel about this at the time?

Castle Heights was home for me, I was there every week for years, it was hard. The last show there was supposed to be **Darkside NYC**, **Irate**, **Billy Club Sandwich** and **EGH**, the show did not make it past **EGH**'s set. It got out of control, the cops came and the show got shutdown. So that just left a bad taste in our mouths collectively cause when you think Castle Heights, you think **Irate**, you think **Billy Club**, you think **EGH**, you think **Sworn Enemy**, loads of bands played there like **Hatebreed**, **Candiria**, **NRSV**, **Indecision**, **Shutdown** etc but we were the house bands. So to not play the last show there? Heartbreaking. Especially seeing as we had all our gear there, we're 45mins away from playing and things happen that eliminated that from happening.

I know Kevin Castle was definitely upset with the ending, I think in his mind it was a lot of out of towners trying to live up to a 'violent' reputation of the club and just taking it too far...

Yeah there was some of that but also that was the point. You wanted this reputation to entice these out of town kids to come and check a show at Castle Heights and then bring it back to Europe or wherever they came from and brag 'I saw **Irate** or **Billy Club** or **EGH** at Castle Heights'

That was a thing at that point. Also it possibly wasn't that smart to book all of us on the same line-up cause you couldn't of thought it would go all the way without something happening haha. But we ended up getting that line-up and taking it on tour to Puerto Rico in 2004, which was what should've happened at Castle, we just took it to Puerto Rico instead. That was amazing, that was the truest celebration of our bands, our friendships and our legacy of being Castle Heights born and bred and taking it round the world. When you get all those four bands altogether, it was going to be hijinks, pranks, drinking, smoking all that shit and good times.

Tom Murphy said the weed in Puerto Rico was awful but he brought a lot of acid to make up for it..

I'll back him on that, it was awful but we were having such a good time it didn't matter. Tom Murphy was running around crazy towards the end on acid haha. Billy Club got a 15 minute video on Skate Rock covering that tour that is online if you wanted to see footage.

I know you did a few demos between 2001-2005, was there a break between the 2 albums before recording NY Metal CD?

We were just touring heavily, playing lots of shows, living off the material. We put out some great music as a band but it took us a long time to write new music. So we were demoing the tracks multiple times etc in those years but we were also perfectionists, so we were slow album writers in that respect. But when it was done, we were super proud of it.

What was the feeling around the band going into recording that 2nd album, was there a feeling before recording this maybe the last Irate record?

Not at the time no. At the time, it was the next chapter for the band, the only thing we had on our minds was "how the fuck do we beat 11:34?". Not that it was a competition, but you always wanted to step it up. Personally, it's my favourite Irate record. We worked on that album very hard, the reason I love that album so much is because it was the most musically mature we got in our career, as a metalhead I love the technical shit which we did on "11:34" but New York Metal was a step up. It was a lot more maybe 'pretty'? But I felt we were pushing the boundaries musically of what we could do, more solid, more musical, heavier, groovier, all there. At the end of the day, we wrote music we wanted to hear. The album cover is the rooftop of my own building back in the Bronx, that album art is so Bronx it's ridiculous. We used to hang out on Bronx rooftops and had parties, drank, hooked up with girls etc. It's my favourite Irate record.

A music video for Vendetta was released on the Guerrilla Warfare Vol.3 in 2004/2005, I feel for most people online THAT is the starting point for a lot of people discovering Irate

Yeah that catapulted us, the guy who did that Guerrilla Warfare volume had great distribution and got us out there and 'Vendetta' just blew up for us. Prior to 'Vendetta' the song we had that would get the biggest reaction was 'Transcendence' and then 'Vendetta' came out and that became our closing song. We gave the guy who did Guerrilla Warfare a ton of live footage and he put that music video together. There's some footage of us playing an NYHC booze cruise in that video, the first shot of that video is us on the boat where you can see the world trade centres still standing in the background. Every time I see that it hits me in my heart, I was down there when 9/11 happened, saw everything that happened that day, much closer than perhaps I should have.

Irate live, Sept 1999 Photo: @flojopendejo



From what you have expressed in other interviews, you accomplished a lot with this band specifically in the metal circles, what sort of shows stick out to you as achievements?

The biggest achievement we had for me personally, out of all the shows and bands we got to play with etc was getting our music video on Headbanger's Ball on MTV. When I was young, my only access to heavy music was Headbanger's Ball and to see my band's video on there, I was overcome with emotion, I was 15 years old again and the journey I had made up to that point flashed before my eyes. My mom cried seeing it, because she was so proud, we watched it together and just seeing the pride in her from me doing something I said I was going to do years ago and it wasn't a waste of my time so for me, that was the coolest thing..

Fast forward to today and you're in the process of putting out a new project with Nando of Irate and your son called Knights of The Black, whats the status of this project and what do you hope to do with it?

So the album was delayed by a year, I had an injury to my vocal chords last year. I took 8 months out, just started recording again this week, just finished a new track yesterday. I'm feeling reinvigorated with music again now, feel on top of the world. The goal is to get an album out by the fall/winter of this year, the music is written, there is going to be 9 songs, it's going to be called "Hymns of The Blasphemous". I'm really excited for it to hit the street, there's not really any plans outside apart from playing some shows but we need a drummer as we hired a session drummer to play on the record, we shot ourselves in the foot with having such an insane drummer play on the record. But the focus right now is to get this record out, we've got all the avenues and the connections to get this out there, as excited I am to get this out, I'm most of all excited for my son.



Photo: Tom Murphy



Castle Classics

As well as being a habitat to such classic records like 'Negative Outlook', '11:34', 'Superheroes of Leisure', 'Dark Seeds of Man' etc, there were many more classic recordings associated with Castle Heights, here is a small selection of what else is out there to dig out and dive into...

Dehumanized - Prophecies Foretold

An early progenitor of 'slam' death metal, this Dehumanized EP is everything a Hardcore kid could want out a death metal band. Solid state buzzing guitars, over inflated dodgeball snare, guttural vocals, devastating mosh parts and Playstation 1 cover art. It's a shame they didn't record more in this first incarnation. This should be permanently saved onto any self respecting Johnny Spinkick's itunes.



Cold Front - Self Titled

Despite new jack HC kids instant connection with bands like Crown of Thornz (do they actually like them or just like using their song titles as IG handles?), Cold Front occupy almost the exact same sonic ground and yet don't receive even half the shine. A shame, as this self titled CD released by Chris In Effect Fanzine is a masterpiece of 1990s melodic NYHC, would dump \$1K+ on getting this pressed on vinyl just to own a copy.



Denied - Together As None

This is the 2nd time I'm writing about this EP in a Deep Cutz fanzine and for good reason, it's a bonafide classic. Downtuned, downbeat beatdown with a depressive atmosphere and killer artwork, new jacks stay trying to match this and stay failing miserably. P.S stop advertising your dead bands as 'FFO: **Denied/Bulldoze**' it sounds like neither, a more accurate description would be 'FFO: the latest old band shirt I bought from an online merch store'.



Eye 2 Eye - Discography

The 5th band in the **Five Fingers of Death**, as their discography is not as sizeable as their contemporaries they often get overlooked. A kind soul has compiled their demos and split 7" tracks on youtube as well as a Crucial Chaos set which is well worth the listen. Old school groove laden NYHC in the vein of **EGH/Fit of Anger** that ain't afraid to go hard.

EYE 2 EYE DEMO

Relentless - Demo + split 7" with Denied

OG I.D.S style, again not a lot from this band but still worth checking out, kinda like a more beatdown **District 9** with a bit of **Downset** rap influence? It's very cool and unique. There is a video of Lil Gregg single handedly destroying the dancefloor to **Relentless** on youtube if you needed the cosign to check this out.



SWORN ENEMY

Mindset @ Castle Heights

Photo: Tom Murphy



Arguably the 'breakout' band of the Castle Heights scene, vocalist of Sworn Enemy, Sal LoCoco was very generous to do an Instagram call interview with me on 11th May 2022.

To establish some context, did you grow up in Queens, NY?
Born and raised yes, first 24 years of my life.

At what age did you discover Metal/Hardcore and what was your first gig you went to?

Discovered **Judas Priest & Iron Maiden** when I was like 12/13 years old, started to progress when I got older listening to **Exodus, Testament, Slayer, Metallica** etc. One of the first shows I went to was **Anthrax** in Manhattan 1986 with **Armoured Saint & Cro Mags** supporting, seeing **Cro Mags** was like the greatest thing, became a fan instantly and got into hardcore, bought all the records after.

I think Tom Murphy said he was at that same show....

Yeah I mean when you see that, it's life changing. It was like a before and after effect after seeing the **Cro Mags** back then.

Did any local bands from Queens, NY inspire you growing up?

I mean **Leeway** was a local band to me who definitely inspired me, one of the first crossover bands that I really loved. There was a local band called **Emanon** that were good friends of mine, they were so ahead of their time, such an amazing band.

Barry from Goatamentise said they played their first show with Emanon at Bond Street Café...

Yep they were a Bond Street Café favourite back in the day, the singer and the guitarist were good friends of mine, they were friends of our band **Downfall** at the time, we'd hang out at shows and just be morons together.

You mentioned in a previous interview that you played in some bands in the late 1980s/early 1990s jamming in a studio on weekends which became Downfall?

You know at that time you could either hang out in the park and drink beer or hang out in the studio, write tunes and drink beer y'know? Me and bunch of dudes would just go into a studio smoke weed, drink beer, be knuckleheads, play music. I just happened to know all the lyrics to all **Overkill, Nuclear Assault** songs they were covering so I got handed the mic and that was that.

Did you guys ever record or play a show?

No, we played like a BBQ thing on Howard's Beach once, actually we did play Bond Street Café in 1994 with a band called **Warcraft**

Downfall formed into Mindset, who played their first show was on 9th March 1997 at Castle Heights, do you remember what the bill was you played and what your initial feelings on the place were?

Nah I can't remember the bill honestly. It was new to us, it wasn't exactly a memorable show, in Queens you had to build your name and rep before people who knew who the fuck you were and it was a tough spot to play. We were a bunch of nobodies and only got a spot at Castle cause someone in the band knew John or Kevin.

Mindset releases a demo in 1997 not long after and becomes a resident band at Castle Heights around this time along with other bands such as EGH, Billy Club Sandwich, Irate, Eye 2 Eye etc, at what point did the 'Five Fingers of Death' nickname come about for these Castle Heights bands?

Yeah after the demo came out we started getting noticed, playing out more people would check us out. The 'Five Fingers of Death' nickname would come around 1997/98 like not long after the demo came out, someone in **Irate** or **Billy Club** came up with the nickname. Y'know around that time we were playing a lot around Castle Heights, like twice a month maybe, us, **Irate, Billy Club, EGH, Eye 2 Eye**. And then we were playing all these spots upstate NY with Castle bands, so it was like a clique cause we were playing so often with each other's bands.

Mindset hooks up with Back Ta Basics via Rick Ta Life in 1998, who releases the ‘State of the Mind’ 7” as well as getting on the New Found Hope CD comp, what can you tell us about recording this, the reception to the release and your dealings with Rick?

I remember we were up in Upstate NY with Jean Christophe, he had recorded everyone on the ‘New Found Hope’ comp CD, don’t really remember much just going up recording a couple of songs and that was it. Everybody knew Rick, he was playing everywhere all the time bringing his taco stand with him, everybody knew he was an outlet to get your music to the masses, whether it was honestly or dishonestly. We spoke with him at a show, we had been playing a while now and gained some respect and he was “yeah I’ll definitely put it out” and then the 7” came out some time later and then people really started to know who we were because Rick was shipping that shit out to Europe, Japan, all over

And that was like a big impact when that 7” dropped?

Oh definitely, was really big for us, helped us out.

Was there the feeling around Rick Ta Life like ‘yeah this guy might be shady but if he’s gonna get our name and music out there then why not’?

Like we had just become friends with **E Town Concrete** around the same time and heard all the stories from them about his shady business practices but for us, if he was gonna press extra records and not tell us... we weren’t a money hungry band if it was gonna get the music out there to the masses then more power to him. He could’ve fucking pressed a million of them and sold them I didn’t care, meant a million people liked us you know.

Mindset records what would become the ‘Negative Outlook’ CD and at a show you play with Hatebreed, talk it out with Jamey Jasta on releasing it on Stillborn. Do you remember anything about recording the CD and what your ideas were for the sound/lyrics and the artwork for it?

It actually said Mindset on the artwork of the ‘Negative Outlook’ EP up until a band called Mindset from VA called my house number, I don’t know how the fuck they found it and told us like ‘yeah you’re gonna have to change your name or we are going to sue you’. So we had already approached Jamey about putting the CD out at a show we played with **Hatebreed** in Boston and we had all the music, layout, artwork done already but then we get this call and we had to go back to guy who did the art to change the name on it and come up with a different name and we landed on **Sworn Enemy**, rest is history you know.

As a side note, did you hear the youth crew band from DC called Mindset from a few years ago? Do you have any feelings on them using the name?

No, I never listened to them, I did hear that a Mindset from DC existed but I could only guess the VA band broke up so they didn’t have the hassle that we had of having to change the name.

Did the name change jam you up at all?

Well at first everyone would just put ‘formerly Mindset’ on flyers for the first few months but when the ‘Negative Outlook’ EP came out no one knew who Mindset was anymore, we were **Sworn Enemy** and that was it, cause it was legit on Stillborn records with a CD pumped out across the country, it was in Jamey’s distro and he was in every single state with **Hatebreed**. We did 5 dates with **Hatebreed** when the CD dropped, first show we played was a Long Island show with us, **Hatebreed, Living Sacrifice**, I forget who else, we must’ve sold like 300-400 CDs that night alone, it was retarded.

That’s insane, I did note from the interview you did with Drew Stone that the CD sold like hot cakes when it dropped...

We couldn’t hold onto them, I was constantly driving to Jameys house to pick up another case of CDs, back and forth, selling out, restocking, selling out etc



Mindset @ Castle Heights Photo: Tom Murphy



NEGATIVE OUTLOOK

And I'm sure that ethic of always saying yes was definitely a great sell to Jamey to push you guys further if you were provably a hard-working band...

Definitely, he saw that we worked hard, especially in the beginning cause we wanted to get somewhere.

You eventually sign to Elektra records, did they have any creative say in the recording of 'As Real As It Gets' or was it a 'here's a budget, go record' type situation?

No they didn't have any say in what was written, it was all us. They let us do what we had to do, but that was probably the issue which was they didn't know what to do with us. We were in a weird spot cause Elektra had **Motley Crue**, they had **Pantera** who were already commercially huge and then there's us, these up and coming nobodies and they had no idea what to do with the style of music we were playing. Like I'd get 5-10 interviews a day and these interviewers were like Nu Metal people who interviewed **Korn** and **Limp Bizkit**, then they'd have to speak to me. At the time, everyone was a **Korn** or **Limp Bizkit** wannabe, y'know when we toured every local band either sounded like **Korn** or **Limp Bizkit**, I was like 'wow this is terrible'.

Did you feel any sort of pressure to come up with a 'single' on the record when you recorded that first album?

That wasn't us, there's no single here, we're gonna write what we want and people will like us off of that. There was a point when the management team wanted me to change some lyrics on the track 'Sworn Enemy' but I just said no, not happening.

I did make a mention to some of the other guys I interviewed that for most the Castle Heights bands to be self-releasing their CDs and Sworn Enemy was signed to Elektra is quite the polar opposites going on..

I mean you gotta evaluate each individual band, we were hungry, we wanted to go out on the road and play. The other bands wanted to play too but they weren't as hungry as what we were, we were like 'fuck the jobs, fuck the work' let's go out on tour and try and make this work. I can't speak for the other bands, I'm not sure what their situations were.

Before 'As Real As It Gets' CD dropped in 2003, Castle Heights closed it's doors in 2002, were you still playing Castle up until the end and how did this feel at the time?

We were non stop touring, from like 2001/2002 to like 2008/2009 I was barely ever home. It was sad when it closed, it wasn't just a place we played, it was place where I went to hang out with John & Kevin, they'd be no shows going on there and I'd be at the bar and shoot the shit. I'd go when there were rock bands on, karaoke night etc I'd just go there to hang out, they were all my friends there. When it closed it was like a piece of me was leaving, you can ask anyone who was there at the time it was one of the greatest places ever.

You end up getting on the Ozzfest tour in 2003, what was the lineup and how was that as an experience?

Best tour ever, rock'n'roll boot camp. It was like on the main stage **Disturbed**, **Korn**, **Marilyn Manson**, our stage was like **Cradle of Filth**, **Voivod**... only bands I cared about was **Killswitch Engage**, **Chimaira**, **E Town Concrete**, **Shadows Fall**. We just hung with those bands the entire time, that was the crew. We did off dates on that with **Cradle of Filth**, **Shadows Fall** and **Killswitch Engage** but that was it.

Looking back, do you think you were in a perfect storm with the right record at the right time at the right place for it to have sold as well as it did?

I think we were in a good spot at a good time, personally I wish the band emerged a few years earlier, if we could've came out like when **Hatebreed**, **Fury of V**, **All Out War** all came out in the early 90s, I think we would've been better off. I can't complain, Sworn Enemy has had a great career, I've seen a lot of places done a lot of things, no complaints, just wish we were out the gate earlier

Was there any labels sniffing around you after the 'Negative Outlook' EP seeing as how well it did?

No labels were sniffing around us, it was just Jamey with Stillborn looking out for us. Jamey was the driving force behind getting us signed as he brought us to his management called No Name, Jamey pushed us in their ear, got us on a lot of tours. First tour we got on was through Jamey, full US tour with **D.R.I.** First big tour we did was with **Poison The Well** in 2001, Jamey told **Poison The Well** if they took us out on tour, **Hatebreed** would in turn take them out, which he did not have to do, but he did. That tour was amazing, every night sold out, I was living in a bubble prior to that I had never heard of **Poison The Well**, here I was a kid from Queens and did not know anything outside of NYHC, so we got out on this **Poison The Well**, **Unearth**, **Spark Lights The Friction** tour package and every night was sold out. Anaheim House of Blues, sold out, 1000 capacity, I was like 'yo this is crazy!', watching **Poison The Well** every night the singalongs were huge, the crowds were intense, it was unbelievable. At the time things were just popping off, y'know Jamey would call me like 'yo can you get to North Carolina tomorrow?' and I'd be like "....fuck. I haven't talked to anyone in the band!' but I'd say yes instead of no just so I knew we got that opportunity.



Clockwise from top center: Sai LoCoco, Mike Gouts, Mike Ruffinello, Paula Antognini, Lorenzo Antonucci



sworn enemy



We started it in Dallas TX on June 26th and ended September 9th, we played every single night of that stretch and that's the way we liked it. The label took care of the financial aspect of being on that tour so there was nothing to worry about for us on doing that tour.

Was there ever an intention to try and bring Castle Heights bands out on the road with you (outside of the NY Invasion tour you did in Puerto Rico)?

It was never really feasible to do that, we were always the support band on tours so we couldn't necessarily take bands out with us, we never really headlined. Things just never came to fruition on that, it sucks I wish we could've made something happen but also I'm not sure how many of the bands actually wanted to tour, doing full US tours for 30/40 days you know.

You switch up labels between the 1st CD and 2nd CD and sign to Abacus recordings, what was the reasoning for that?

Elektra didn't know what to do with us, I guess because we didn't do the same numbers that **Hatebreed** did on their major label debut and they dropped us. Y'know no ill will towards them, we were very happy with what they did for us and we wouldn't of done half the shit we had achieved if it wasn't for their support in the beginning. I forget what festival it was in Europe but Robert who half owned Century Media approached us at a fest and said 'I'd like to sign you guys' cause he knew Elektra had dropped us. 'Talk to your management see what we can sort', he came off as a nice guy at the time, that's how the Abacus deal came about. Nobody else wanted anything to do with us and could never understand why, it was like we had a stigma about us. People didn't want to book us or deal with us etc, we were treated like hardened criminals or something like we were murdering people on the road. Still to this day we have a stigma. We did nothing but tour back then.

I'm sure you were killing it in Europe back then...

At that time? Bro, the shows were insane. Like the first tour in Europe we did was the 2003 Eastpak resistance tour, the shows were ridiculous, people were starving for us to go over. This tour had **Suicidal Tendencies, Ignite, Madball, Death By Stereo, Length of Time & Knuckledust**, we were killing it every night. Not to say the other bands weren't, but we were destroying.

I've seen some footage of your set from that tour and it looks like you were the headlining band the reaction is that good...

Dude.....London? We had like 5 pits the entire set, had so many people come up to us afterwards telling us we were the best band that night. Think of the bands we were with and people were still saying we were the best that night, it was fucking crazy. Couldn't of asked for a better first tour.

Did you have any view to change the sound up on the 2nd CD?

Nope, just keep going on what we were doing, when we recorded that record I think we got more harder & heavier. I feel we brought more beatdown into the sound. When I listened to that record the first time we had it all complete, I honestly thought it would be the record to take us to the next level but boy was I mistaken. We were called sell outs after that CD, which I could never understand how when we got heavier, if we started playing Motely Crue shit yeah I could get it, call us sell outs. But when it's heavier and harder than the previous stuff? I don't know man...



What was your feelings on the big wave of metalcore that was happening in the mid-late 2000s around the same time your 2nd CD dropped? I know you toured a lot with those style of bands back then...

It wasn't really my thing, I liked hardcore, I liked metal but I didn't like metalcore. It was a totally different style to us, you could see it in how the bands dressed at that time, the fashion they brought to shows.....I just thought it was weird. We did play a lot with those type of bands, that was the scene at the time, as I said I wished we had come around 10 years earlier it would've been different. A lot of these metalcore bands were like flavour of the week, they weren't built for longevity, they just wanted to get big fast, they came and went so quickly, there was quite a few that stuck around and had good careers but tons that were here today gone the next.

I did think of the culture clash of an urban band like Sworn Enemy coming from Queens, roughing it out at Castle Heights touring with suburban metalcore bands wearing skinny jeans....

That's the thing, we were caught in an era where we still went to shows and saw bands that lived on the street, lived in squats etc and then we went out and played with bands with silver spoons in their mouths and their parents had millions of dollars. You can't compare the two, you can't compare the generations, I mean hardcore is a sound but it's also a way of life and back then it was getting away from the lifestyle of hardcore. Hardcore was about humble beginnings of growing up on street, barely a dime in your pocket...

Agnostic Front, Cro Mags etc

Exactly, we were seeing those bands in the late 1980s/early 1990s and saw them during the great times when the shows were insane in New York. And then we graduated to the next stage where there's hardcore bands wearing skinny jeans. I won't mention any names, but we took a metalcore band out on tour long time ago, the bass player came back from a store, so we all ask 'what you buy?' and he bought a pair of jeans for almost \$200. This was in the early 2000s. \$200 for a pair of skinny jeans. \$200. We were all looking around at each other like ".....this motherfucker got \$200? He's not even in the headlining band!'. That was like a culture shock.

Fast forward to current day, Sworn Enemy will tour Europe in April 2023 with Pain of Truth & Worst Doubt, did you guys pick these bands or did the booking agent pick them?

The booking agent suggested them to us as they wanted to come over. **Billy Club** were supposed to play one of **Pain of Truth**'s first shows, but couldn't do it, so Glen passed my number onto Mike Smith who asked us if we could fill the spot, so I was like hell yeah, we're playing in Europe together why not play a show over here together, definitely. It was very cool of them to ask us, cause **Pain of Truth** is huge! Like they sold that place out 2 nights in a row, they were in **Hangman** that was a big band, then they stopped and then start **Pain of Truth** which is another big band! Fair play to them cause they are all nice guys.

It's very cool you guys linked up because I think Pain of Truth are playing a style of Hardcore reminiscent of early Sworn Enemy...
I agree, you see Mike on stage rocking band shirts of bands we used to play with way back when.

I think it's very cool package that younger kids will come for Pain of Truth and stick around and check out Sworn Enemy as a result, the style of hardcore you guys play is well in renaissance at the minute...

I hope you're right man, I said to Mike at the show that by time it rolls round **Pain of Truth** may have to headline! We'll go on before you. I can only hope that the kids appreciate us, I always thought if we stuck to who we are and kept our integrity, I always thought we like many other bands at the time would have a renaissance period. I always thought if we maintained it'd happen, like recently we played a little show in CT it sold out, played Albany NY there was a 100 people there, it's promising, positive signs. I hope there are some younger bands that are trying to sound like us who will eventually take us out on tour!



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GOATAMENTISE

NYHC

One of the lesser known Castle Heights bands, **GOATAMENTISE** were a pretty emblematic band of the Bronx scene fusing Death Metal with NYHC alongside bands like **IRATE** and **DEHUMANIZED**. I interviewed Barry on 29th October 2021.

Just for a bit of context, where were you born and where did you grow up in New York?

I was born in the Bronx, raised in the Bronx. Y'know New York City itself.

What age did you first discover metal & hardcore and what was the first shows you went to?

I didn't grow up listening to Metal very young, I grew up in the 1980s, you pretty much just listened to everything going on. My first exposure to metal was an **Iron Maiden** poster at a carnival, I didn't know who or what they were but I liked comic books and cool drawings. It was a Stranger In A Strange Land poster, with the hat and the trench coat.

So that was like 1986?

Yeah, so I see this poster, it was like \$1, I bought it, went home and stuck it on my wall. My friend across the street was a metalhead, he came up stairs and we were hanging out and he was like "oh you're into Maiden?" and I was like "yeah...it's like a character, right?" and he was like "no man it's a band!" and he then introduced me into Maiden. And that was pretty much it, he got me into **Manowar**, **Metallica**, **Carnivore**, **Venom**, he'd keep tabs on anything that came out from the mid to late 1980s.

New York in the late 1980s - early 1990s was quite the place for hardcore & metal, what were some of the first shows you went to?

I think the first real known band I went to see was **Judas Priest** in Long Island with **Megadeth** and **Testament** supporting on the Painkiller tour. Afterwards I saw like **Cannibal Corpse** when they first came round, **Sick Of It All** at CBGBs, then you just start to go to shows out of like an addiction but yeah those were the first ones. I remember seeing **Kreator**, **Biohazard**, **Morgoth** at L'amours, that was the first time I saw a whole lot of NYHC kids in one place for **Biohazard**, it was a real presence.

The first Goatamentise demo came out in 1993, how did the band form and how did those first set of songs come about?

Me and the drummer Frankie were the first members, I went out to find a drummer first cause I was told that was the most important member to get. I played bass back then, a kid from my high school joined on guitar, we just jammed. We were going to be a 3 piece at first but I didn't feel comfortable with singing, so we got Martin on vocals. We had 2 songs we just went over and over, with some crappy lyrics. Our first song we did was called "Evil Lord", it was the cheesiest song ever, I hope no one has a recording of that. The other one was called "Evil Speaks", we were like on an evil quest, everything had to be evil. Then after we had the song "Suicide" which for some reason stuck, we played that song every show until the end because people seemed to like it, that song was more Hardcore orientated. Also Martin the singer of **Billy Club Sandwich**, he was the original singer of Goatamentise at the start.

What were your influences and do you remember your first show?

When me and my old drummer Frankie would get together, we would warm up some **Grave & Sick Of It All** songs, we didn't even have music at this stage we would just jam. That was where we were at with our influences, we were Death Metal but still very influenced by hardcore. Our first show was at Bond Street Café where **Sub Zero**, **Confusion** and **All Out War** had played before, we played our show there with a band called **Stand Clear** and **Emenon**, who I think the guitarist went on from that band to play in **Sworn Enemy**. Once word started spreading around on who we played with, we got associated with Hardcore, it wasn't like the 80s anymore where there was a divide, it was the early 1990s where you'd have a Thrash, Death Metal and Hardcore band all on the same bill. **Immortal Suffering** was one of the bigger New York death metal bands back then, we played with them a lot. We didn't care about the style, if you were cool people, everything was cool.

How were you labelling yourselves back then, were you calling yourselves Hardcore, Death Metal or in it's true original meaning, Deathcore?

Right off the bat we were calling ourselves Deathcore. I've always said that I think **Goatamentise**, **Darkside NYC**, **All Out War**... we were pretty much the ones who came up with the label 'Deathcore'. True Deathcore to me was Death Metal with NYHC influences, you heard it in the music the both styles and elements of influence. To me, Deathcore was made in the 1990s, when you had Hardcore and Death Metal blowing up at that time.

I'd agree with that, obviously you had bands like Confusion before too that were calling themselves Deathcore....

Yeah **Confusion**, oh man I love **Confusion**, they used to open up a lot of shows in Brooklyn when **Deicide** would play, and you could tell they had influences of both styles.

Goatamentise in 1994



When did Goatamentise first start playing Castle Heights and what bands did you play there with?

I think about 1997 was the first time we started playing Castle Heights, honestly can't even remember which bands we played with the first time. After that show it became our home, after that from 1997 we always played Castle Heights. Kevin Scondotto would always hit us up if he had a slot. We even opened for **Mastodon** there for their first CD release show, which is crazy now that they are such a huge band nowadays...

Castle Heights frequently gets referred to as 'Castle Fights' online by people who may or may not have been to a Castle Heights show, can you think of any anything that justifies that nickname?

As far as fights go, I never really saw any brawls in there you know, if anyone got out of hand John the bouncer would walk in, grab them and throw them out. As far as slam dancing you know people did there thing in there, I don't know if you are familiar with Lil Greg?



From Everybody Gets Hurt?

Yeah that guy.... he was like a little ninja. He was doing crazy flips and spin kicks, if he got you, he really got you. But yeah, back then it was guys going off slamming and dancing to bands, getting their energy out in the pit doing their thing. If you were around back then, you knew how to handle yourself around it. I don't remember any fights happening in the club, if any did it would happen around the block.

Goatamentise put out the 'Severed Ties' EP in 1998, how was this release received at the time?

Yeah that one in 1998, that was when we had this kid called Malik who was on vocals after Martin left. Let me tell you a story about this kid, he sang in this band called **Rights Reserved** before and he was friends with our guitarist so we kind of let him in as a favour to our guitarist. He wasn't great but he was enthusiastic, he dabbled in illegal drugs etc. We play our CD release show with **Billy Club Sandwich** and **Irate** at Castle Heights, I'll never forget Malone from BCS pulls me aside and says 'Yo Barry I was ready to kill your singer' I was like 'Yo why?', he says 'I go to shake his hand to say hi and hope you have a good set tonight etc and he slaps my hand away'. In my head I'm like alright I gotta get rid of him, we play the show, the singer makes an ass of himself pulling his trousers down on stage, it was a mess. We take him backstage after and tell him you gotta go. But yeah Severed Ties EP is a shame cause I thought it was a good recording, Nando from **Irate** wrote 'Book Of Lies' and 'Embryonic Torture' that was on that EP.

Goatamentise in 1998



Who was the B.D.C?

Our crew "BDC" which stood for Boogie Down Crew, was all the Bronx bands and we'd play shows together, it was nice. We only had two venues in the Bronx which was The Black Thorn and The Train Depot so that's where we'd play, we had some decent shows. We'd all look out for each other, so back then you had **Close Call, Driven By Hatred, Blackout, Irate, Rights Reserved, The Wasted....** bunch of bands.

When it came to label interest and tours, was that ever a thing with Goatamentise?

Nah I mean we were a small local band, we didn't play out of New York state until 1999. Our first time we played out of New York was in Pennsylvania when we did a tour with **4 In Tha Chamber**, which was a big deal for us and was amazing, we had more people into us after playing there than we did in New York. We never really got to travel and push ourselves out there, I thank **4 In Tha Chamber** for taking us out cause they really repped for us. We had some interest from the Century Media imprint that **4 In Tha Chamber** were on as they pushed us to them, but that was much later afterwards.

What was the best show you played or saw at Castle Heights?

Best show I played there was the last Goatamentise show we played there, with our guitarist Milton before he passed makes it very special in hindsight. **Cryptopsy** from Canada came down and played once, I couldn't believe them, they blew my mind, they tore that place apart. They were touring on 'And Then You'll Beg' CD from 2000.

What do you miss about Castle Heights and that era of music the most?

Wow, I guess just going there and hanging out and having a good time. It was a family affair, everyone became family hanging out there. We all knew each other, we looked out for each other, it was our home.

Thanks Barry really appreciate your time and answering these questions, if there's anything you want to plug please do:

Yeah check out my YouTube channel THATGOATMETALSHOW, I have a merch store out here too hit me up if you're want Star Wars merch!

